(b) if so, what is the total amount of aid received so far and what is the actual amount spent;

(c) what are the reasons for the non-utilisation of the amount of aid received; and

(d) when the period of the agreement expires and what are the prospects of the completion of the project besides further aid?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) A loan agreement for US $ 390 million was entered into with World Bank for modernisation of railway track.

(b) to (d) The total loan amount of US $ 390 million is to be utilised by 31-12-93. As on 31-07-92 US $ 148.52 million have been utilised. The project execution is a continuing activity. Loan agreement may be extended further if required.

Connecting the train to Sri Ganganagar-Abohar Bhatinda

4534. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is only one mail train for Sri Ganganagar-Abohar-Bhatinda section connecting rest of the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that for the last one year timing of this train has been changed causing 11 hours wastage and waiting causing great inconvenience to the travelling public;

(c) what steps are being taken to correct the timing;

(d) whether there is any proposal to start a mail train during day time on this section;

(e) whether it is a fact that the only mail train connecting Sri Ganganagar-Abohar-Patiala-Ambala section with the capital of Punjab Chandigarh is not operating for the last one year; and

(f) what steps are being taken for the resumption of this train?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Timings of 3008 Udyan-Abha Toofan Express have been changed between Sri Ganganagar and Bhatinda due to difficult law and order situation in Punjab; the waiting time at Bhatinda being 6 hrs. and not 11 hrs.

(c) its original timings could not be restored due to difficult law and order situation.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) and (f) There was no direct train running between Ambala/Chandigarh and Sri Ganganagar. Two through coaches between Kalka and Sri Ganganagar discontinued from 30-12-1991 have since been restored w.e.f. 3-8-1992.

Anomaly between traffic and commercial apprentices

4535. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any anomaly prevails between the Traffic/Commercial apprentices selected before to 15th May, 1987 and those selected after 15th May, 1987;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of employees of the above categories selected perior to 15th May, 1987 and not treated at par with those selected after 15th May, 1987 in terms and fixation of pay etc.;

(d) whether it is not a fact that the Central Administrative Tribunals upheld in their judgements that the above two grades of employees should be treated equally in terms of fixation of pay etc.;

(e) whether the Railway authorities are prepared to issue general instructions to treat both the categories of employees equally in terms and wages etc; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

However, a specific decision was taken to make the specified quota of direct recruitment in the higher grade Rs. 1600—2660 w.e.f. 15-5-1987 instead of in scale Rs. 1400—2300 in which the recruitment was done earlier.

(c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

(d) to (f) Some benches of Central Administrative Tribunal have given orders for extending the same higher grade to the earlier recruits. Special Leave Petitions have been filed against the orders in a few cases. These are pending before the Hon'ble Supreme Court and the outcome is awaited.

Train service between West Bengal and different parts of North Eastern region via Bangladesh

4536. SHRI MD. SALIM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to resume train services between West Bengal and different parts of North Eastern region including Agartala via Bangladesh;

(b) whether Government have been taking it up with the Bangladesh Government;

(c) if so, what is the result thereof; and

(d) if not, by when Government propose to open the dialogue with Bangladesh in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) to (d) A proposal to provide rail transit facilities through Bangladesh to the North Eastern region of India has been suggested to the Government of Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh has so far not agreed to provide this facility due to technical reasons.

Electrification of routes in Railways

4537. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 3027 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 5th August, 1992 and state:

(a) how the railway electrification compares with the Britain, Japan, Italy, China, Germany, France and the U.S.A.;

(b) what are the important trunk routes which have been electrified so far in the country; and

(c) by when the remaining trunk routes are likely to be electrified and the target date for the completion of work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Country-wise position of electrification is as under:

Name of Country	Route Kms. electrified	% age route electrified
Britain	4910.7	29.61
Japan	15845.0	64.88
Italy	10492.0	54.81
China	5300.0	9.91
Germany	15775.2	36.66
France	12511.0	37.01
U.S.A.	2197.4	00.84
India	10809.0	17.3*

(Source : Jane's World Railways 1991-92)
*Position as on 1-4-1992.